

# **New Member Guide**

Community Resource Coordination  
Groups of Texas

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## **Purpose of Guide**

This New Member Guide is intended to provide a clear and concise orientation to a new member or representative joining a county-based local Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG) team.

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# **I. Reviewing the CRCG Initiative**

## **CRCG: Defined**

Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs) are local interagency groups composed of representatives from public and private agencies that develop service plans for children, adolescents and adults whose needs can be met only through interagency coordination and cooperation. CRCGs for children and youth originated when the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 298 into law in 1987. These bills directed the state agencies serving children to develop a community-based approach to provide better coordination of services for children and youth who have multi-agency needs and require interagency coordination. After achieving statewide coverage for CRCGs serving children and youth, there was interest in using the CRCG collaborative approach for adults. Thus Community Resource Coordination Groups for Adults (CRCGA) were formed. CRCGAs serve adults with needs beyond the capacity of any one agency. Other groups use a CRCG approach to serve a specific population of adults, including adults with Alzheimer's disease, adults with both substance abuse and mental health problems, and adults leaving the state's penal system. Many child-serving CRCGs have joined with adult-serving CRCGs to form a single Community Resource Coordination Group for All Ages.

## **CRCG Membership**

CRCGs are organized by the local community on a county-by-county basis. CRCG members include local professional partners and community members who know about services in their community. Many CRCGs include people who have been through the CRCG process such as individuals, parents, or caregivers as members. All CRCGs should include the following representatives:

### **Local Partners:**

- Family Representatives
- Community and Faith-Based Organizations
- Local Mental Health Authority
- Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority
- Local Independent School Districts
- Juvenile Justice Representative
- Non-profit Organizations
- School counselor or social worker
- Probation Office Representative

**State Agency Partners:**

- Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC)
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
- Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
- Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) - Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments (TCOOMMI)
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD)
- Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

**The CRCG Mission**

CRCGs help people with complex needs that cannot be met by a single agency. They join people or families with public and private agencies to get people the help they need.

Through a collaborative effort, CRCG members meet in partnership with people or families to plan for needed services that enhance the quality of life for those individuals. These efforts contribute to a seamless delivery care system, which offers freedom of choice and preserves individual confidentiality.

CRCG representatives from state and local agencies work together with the person, or the family to find help for their unique needs. The representatives each meet different needs the person, or the family might have. The representatives and the person or family talk for 30 minutes to an hour. During this talk, the person or family shares their situation, and the group discusses possible services that may help. Based on the needs discussed, the CRCG will work with the person or family to create an Individual Service Plan. An Individual Service Plan is an agreement for coordination of services developed between the person or the family and the CRCG. The planning process involves looking at the person or, the family's complex needs and helps them get the services they need. The person, families, and service providers work together to develop the plan during the CRCG meeting. Every community has different services and resources, so each meeting and each plan will be different. However, every CRCG works with the person or family to help them get the services they need.

## **II. The Role of the Individual CRCG Member**

CRCG members include local professional partners and community members who know about services in their community. Many CRCGs also include people who have been through the process before such as individuals, parents, or caregivers. Each of these individual members brings a number of resources to the CRCG.

Although the composition of each group may vary by its private representatives, public providers are generally the same throughout Texas. Private representatives portray the diverse aspects of a local community. The selection of private representatives is the responsibility of CRCG membership in each county or combined counties. For example, a CRCG serving children and youth, may have up to five representatives from the private sector that includes a provider in substance abuse treatment.

It is important that all members of the CRCG are people who can commit resources from their agency or organization. This enables the CRCG to secure appropriate services for individuals in crisis. Often, CRCG representatives are designees who have been empowered with some limited authority to delegate funds or services during service planning meetings.

According to the CRCG Guiding Principles and authorizing legislation, CRCGs are required to include family representatives as standing members. Both public and private agencies should help identify these representatives. A family representative is a parent or legal guardian of a child who has emotional, behavioral, physical, mental health challenges, or intellectual disabilities and has been through the CRCG process. The family representative can answer questions the family might have, and support the family during and after the meeting. A CRCG family representative is encouraged to be at every CRCG Staffing, or meeting where Individual Service Plans are created. A family representative may or may not be present, to make sure person or, family specific needs are met. They can also help a person or family feel more comfortable speaking about their personal life with a group of strangers. Family representatives serve as regular CRCG members and adhere to the same rules of confidentiality as private and public agencies.

## **III. Member Responsibility**

Attendance and participation are important and required elements if the CRCG process is to be successful. Normally, most CRCGs meet on a monthly basis throughout the year on a set date and time every month. Being consistent with meeting place and time helps increase the likelihood for consistent participation. CRCG Chairpersons may inquire from their membership to find out if they are meeting on the best day and time to allow full group participation. As a CRCG

member, you are asked to become involved with the CRCG process. Having been assigned to attend a local CRCG is a privilege. Someone in your agency and/or organization has seen the benefit in becoming involved with this interagency collaborative effort. The meeting is the focal point where your role is realized.

Building trust is said to be the foundation of all relationships. While the composition of CRCGs is often predetermined, the manner in which they develop as a team does vary. Building team unity is based on the actions of the individual members. With CRCGs, the primary role of the team is to coordinate individual service plans for people with complex needs. All members are asked to join forces, pool resources and find solutions as they strive to reach a mutual and satisfactory agreement. The responsibility of each member is to commit services and coordinate efforts to implement the recommendations of the entire group. Reaching this goal takes a lot of individual effort.

The main focus of the CRCG is to secure group consensus and commitments from its members to help meet the needs of the children, youth and adult clients seeking coordinated assistance. Therefore, the first role of each member is to develop a level of trust as a basis for doing collaborative work. Building trust involves four key elements: reliability, acceptance, openness, and congruence. Reliability is the first element of trust. Fellow CRCG members will want to know that you will do what you say. If you make commitments/promises related to CRCG activities, keep them or people will lose faith in you. Acceptance is the second element; it involves learning how to get along with others. Accepting your team members without judging or criticizing them will help insure that trust is being built. Learning to recognize and respect differences in others is very important in developing interagency cooperation. Openness is the third trust element. Be yourself at the meetings. Members tend to want to collaborate with other people they can trust. As you develop a good working relationship with your team members, you will feel more comfortable in sharing and being heard. In turn, you will be the kind of person that is known as honest and straight-forward, and (if acceptance is included in openness), people will want to work with you. The fourth and final element that builds trust is congruence, the knowledge that what you say matches what you believe, what you know to be true, and what you do. Congruence sounds like the same thing as reliability, but there is a difference. Reliability means following-up and seeing through the promises and commitments you make. Congruence means saying and doing what you believe, being straight-forward and honest, saying what is true even if it is unpleasant and not exactly what you think members of the collaborative team want to hear. In other words, it's internal consistency with a set of values and beliefs.

Apply reliability, acceptance, openness, and congruence in your CRCG and soon you will find that you are the kind of person with whom people want to collaborate.

All CRCG mandated agencies have rules and regulations related to confidentiality of client information. Each CRCG member is asked to follow his/her own agency's

standards when sharing or delivering specific client information at a local CRCG meeting. As a potential referral source, you must insure that you have secured and followed specific procedures for releasing information. All information shared in the CRCG meeting is considered confidential and every member is bound by the confidentiality rules of their agency. Any information obtained at the CRCG should not be shared outside the CRCG except as needed to secure services and resources for the person being assisted.

In developing individual service plans, gaining group consensus is a major requirement. People seeking coordinated assistance from the local CRCGs are interested in outcomes. Therefore, your input as a CRCG member becomes critical. CRCG members should make every attempt to partner with their counterparts and challenge each other to attain the best possible solutions.

As important as securing group consensus, is to have the right people at the table to secure commitments to resources and services. As mentioned in the Guide for New Chairs of CRCGs, "The power of the CRCG rests with the willingness of the members to commit resources to assist the customers referred to the CRCG." It is imperative that your agency or organization provide you enough authority to commit resources at the meetings. If you find yourself having to delay committing a service or delegating a resource, you might want to question if your agency/organization is sending the appropriate person to the meeting. In the end, if the service commitments are not met and not followed-up, the client dissatisfaction will be evident.

Engaging and educating your own agency is highly important. Every new member should make a point of communicating back to his or her agency or organization about the CRCG process. The better you and your agency are informed, the better equipped you will be to coordinate services and resources for people in your community. One way to educate the agency or organization you represent is to disperse CRCG brochures among your fellow coworkers. You may consider presenting CRCG information at your agency staff meetings. For those interested in more about the CRCG Program, refer them to the [CRCG website](https://crcg.hhs.texas.gov) (<https://crcg.hhs.texas.gov>) for more information.

Support your role as a member of the CRCG by keeping your supervisor invested in your CRCG activities. Your agency's support of your work with the CRCG, over the long haul, will largely depend on the extent to which your supervisor values the CRCG and the time and energy you devote to it. It is up to you to help your supervisor understand the value of the CRCG to you, to your agency, and to your agency's clients.

Not only can you prepare periodic formal reports, you can keep your supervisor informed and invested in the following numerous small and large ways:

- Invite your supervisor to attend your CRCG meetings from time to time;
- Write articles for your internal news organizations;

- E-mail your supervisor about commitments you have made to a service plan and how it fits with the larger plan;
- Let your supervisor know when one of your agency's clients is referred to the CRCG and keep your supervisor apprised of the progress and outcome;
- Ask or assist your supervisor in making a presentation in the community;
- Volunteer to provide in-service training to agency staff on the CRCG and how to use it to achieve the agency's objectives.

## **IV. What Makes a Good CRCG Member?**

A strong, effective CRCG depends on its members meeting and exceeding member expectations. The more you contribute to the strength, capacity, and effectiveness of your CRCG, the greater the value it will be to your community, your agency and organization, and you. Ten things you can do to strengthen your CRCG are listed are:

### **CRCG Member Top Ten**

1. Educate yourself about your CRCG;
2. Attend the CRCG meetings consistently;
3. Get to know your CRCG colleagues;
4. Take on a leadership role;
5. Be an empathetic listener;
6. Contribute your ideas to the individual service plan;
7. Commit your agency's resources as appropriate to the individual service plan;
8. Refer customers from your agency to the CRCG;
9. Educate others in your agency about the CRCG and its value to your agency and its customers; and
10. Build your cultural competency.

## **V. Supporting Roles**

Leadership is a key element in keeping the CRCG alive in a local community. All new members are encouraged to participate in some manner within their group.



Many CRCG members volunteer their time and energy by taking on a supportive role within their group. Some members take turns leading the group by accepting the role of the CRCG Chairperson. In most CRCGs, the Chairperson is the facilitator of the group and often helps set the tone on how the group will function. The burden on the CRCG Chairperson is generally not sustainable over the long run, unless the Chairperson can distribute the load. As a new member, you can let your Chairperson know that you are willing to help out and accept assignments on either an on-going or as needed basis. This may include such things as chairing or serving on a committee; screening a new client referral; setting up the meeting room; making a presentation to a community group; keeping the minutes for the meetings; arranging for lunch; or a host of other activities. Other members could assist the group by tracking and reporting any follow-up work that needs to be accomplished. In addition, a CRCG may have a timekeeper who helps the group manage its time effectively and efficiently.

A few CRCGs are supported by full or part-time paid positions known as CRCG Coordinators. Coordinators are often responsible for coordinating logistical meeting issues, such as meeting place and time.

Overall, CRCGs are dependent on the support of its member agencies and organizations. CRCG member support comes in a variety of forms including, but not limited to: sending out meeting notices; completing and sending data forms to the state office or filling them out online; providing printing and copying; generating media announcements; including CRCG members in training events; contributing funds for a coordinator or even creating a flexible funding pool. New members might want to find out what their own agency is able and willing to contribute and generate in support of the CRCG.

Data collection is an important facet of the CRCG process. It is important to have a member responsible for collecting data to illustrate the number of people served by CRCGs, the outcomes of services provided, and any gaps and needs encountered by the community. The State CRCG Office is responsible for submitting a biennial report to the administrative head of each participating state agency, the Legislature, and the Governor that provides information on the work of CRCGs across the state.

Getting the word out to local communities that CRCGs exist is an important role for all CRCG members. CRCGs use a variety of methods to provide public awareness to its communities. Some CRCGs organize small sub-committees to help spread the CRCG message; they help create informative brochures, newsletters, and websites; and conduct educational presentations to community providers.

## **VI. Tools**

Training and education opportunities keep CRCG members informed and updated on issues that affect their work with the people they serve. Most CRCGs include

resource-sharing time on their local meeting agendas. This time offers all CRCG team members the opportunity to share information regarding who they are, what agency or organization they represent, and possible resources they have access to. Others hold annual organizational meetings where they review the CRCG mission and elect new chairpersons. The State CRCG Office also provides information on a variety of training and educational opportunities.

The State CRCG Office has developed tools and resources to support CRCG leaders and members. These tools and materials include:

- [CRCG Website](#)
- [CRCG Handbook](#)
- [CRCG New Chair Guide](#)
- [CRCG Checklist for new or expanding CRCGs](#)
- [CRCG Referral Eligibility Requirements](#)
- [CRCG One Pager series](#)
- [Monthly CRCG Bridge Call](#): A monthly conference call for local CRCG leaders and members to receive peer-to-peer support, share ideas, discuss challenges, and network.
- [Quarterly CRCG Webinar Series](#): The State CRCG Office offers a webinar series for local CRCG leaders, members, and other interested persons, to highlight state agency partners and provide training on key statewide initiatives and programs that help serve individuals involved with CRCGs. Check the CRCG Website to sign up for upcoming webinars.
- Direct Training: The State CRCG Office can provide direct training through video conference or site visit depending on needs and resources available. Email the State CRCG Office at [CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us).

## **Bylaws, MOUs, Referral Forms**

All CRCGs are not alike, but all follow the same mandate of collaborating locally in the best interest of their clients. Some groups are very organized and are focused in the way they conduct their business. Many CRCGs use formal structures that incorporate and utilize local bylaws, local memorandums of understanding and follow a formal referral process. Over the past few years, the State CRCG Office has collected a variety of examples of formal referral forms. In addition to the many tools created and identified above, these local examples can be accessed by contacting the State CRCG Office at [CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us).

## **VII. Conclusion**

CRCGs make it more likely for children, youth, adults, and their families to get the help they need within their community before a situation becomes a crisis. The services rendered are provided in a collaborative and cooperative manner. In many communities, CRCGs can help identify the gaps in services for children, youth and adult clients that exist and then plan for appropriate programs to address those needs. As a result, more Texans get the services they need in a timelier manner.

## Glossary of Terms

**Children with serious emotional disturbance** - young people whose problems are so severe that they require the long-term intervention of mental health and other agencies.

**Collaboration** - the process of bringing together those who have a stake in a common population for the purpose of interdependent problem solving that focuses on improving services.

**Coordination** - sharing resources and leadership to provide services, while maintaining individual agency roles, responsibilities and agendas.

**CRCGs** - Community Resource Coordination Groups are local interagency groups composed of representatives from public and private agencies that develop individual service plans for children, youth and adults whose needs can be met only through interagency coordination and cooperation.

**CRCG Chairperson** - leadership position and point of contact for the agencies/organizations and families to make referrals to local CRCGs.

**CRCG Coordinator** - a dedicated part-time or full-time position, usually funded by a variety of funding sources, who works in partnership with the CRCG Chairperson to meet the needs of the local CRCG.

**Cultural Competence** - a set of behaviors, attitudes and policies of a system, agency or among professionals that enables them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

**Integration of services** - providing services in a community through multiple agencies with decreased overlap and decreased gaps in services.

**Interagency collaboration** - the combined, coordinated, cooperative and interdependent efforts of multiple agencies to provide services that meet the specific needs of a person.

**Interagency cooperative agreement (memorandum of understanding)** - written commitments signed by agencies that spell out standards for services (who does what for whom, when, where, how often, under whose supervision, and to whose benefit), or allocation of resources, or procedures, forms and activities, or all of the above.

**Lead agency** - the identified agency/organization/ group that has agreed to take responsibility for coordinating the recommendations made by the CRCG. Online data collection - the process of collecting CRCG staffing information during the development of an individual service plan. Data is collected at the local meeting and then entered on the [CRCG website](https://crcg.hhs.texas.gov) (<https://crcg.hhs.texas.gov>).

**Out-of-home placement** - services that require an individual to live away from home and possibly outside of their community in order to receive particular services.

**Outcome** - the impact or results of services provided for an individual.

**Permanency planning** - means a philosophy and planning process that focuses on the outcome of family support by facilitating a permanent living arrangement with the primary feature of an enduring and nurturing parental relationship.

**Referral** - the process of contacting a CRCG Chairperson or Coordinator to help set up a CRCG meeting to serve a particular individual.

**System of care** - a philosophy about the way services should be provided for children/families and individuals that is founded on the principle that care should be provided that is community-based (provided in less restrictive settings within or near a child's home community), child-centered, and family-focused, with the needs of the child and family dictating the types and mix of services provided. The system of care is culturally competent with agencies, programs, and services that are responsive to the cultural, racial, and ethnic differences of the populations they serve. This approach provides for a comprehensive spectrum of mental health and other support services (including education, child welfare, and juvenile justice) organized into a collaborative network to meet the multiple changing needs of children, adolescents and their families.

**Wraparound** - philosophy of care that includes a definable planning process involving the child and family that results in a unique set of community services and natural supports individualized for that child and family to achieve a positive set of outcomes.

*(Some definitions taken from: System of Care, Promising Practices in Children's Mental Health. Building Collaborative in Systems of Care, p. 85,86 and Systems of Care Promising Practices in Children's Mental Health, Volume IV, p.xiii.)*

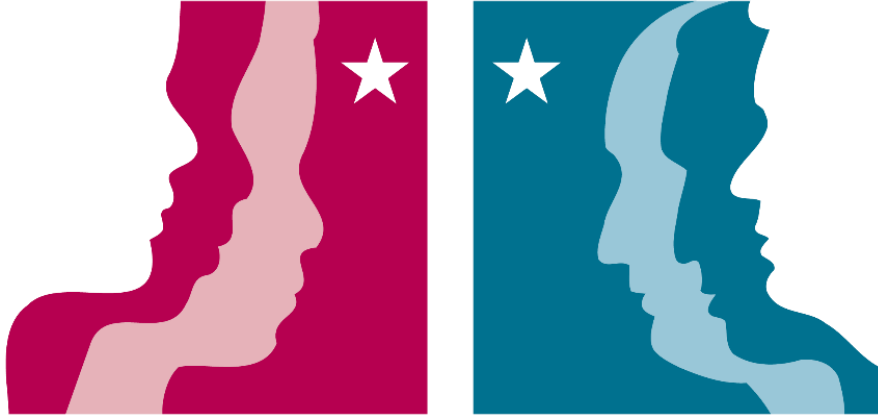
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## **Community Resource Coordination Group of Texas**

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